

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCSE-00 SCA-01 PA-02 PRS-01 USIA-15 H-02

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /039 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/APU:RCFELDER:JC

APPROVED BY ARA/APU:CEBARTCH

ARA:GLISTER

ARA/PAF:RFIMBRES

----- 113465

P 091649Z JUL 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 161021

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, AR (TALAMANTE, OLGA)

SUBJECT: TALAMANTE CASE - PRESS REACTION

FOLLOWING COLUMN BY JACK ANDERSON APPEARED IN WASHINGTON

POST WEDNESDAY, JULY 9:

QUOTE. AMERICAN ANNE FRANK - THIS IS A CRUCIAL WEEK FOR
OLGA TALAMANTE, A 25-YEAR-OLD CALIFORNIAN WHO WAS
ARRESTED, TORTURED AND THROWN IN JAIL LAST NOVEMBER IN
AZUL, ARGENTINA.

SHE COULD BE EXPELLED FROM THE COUNTRY OR BE DETAINED
INDEFINITELY AS A POLITICAL PRISONER.

WE CALLED ATTENTION TO HER STORY IN JANUARY. SHE HAD BEEN
RAISED AND EDUCATED BY FARM-WORKER PARENTS. SHE EARNED
MONEY PICKING GARLIC SO THAT SHE COULD TAKE A TRIP TO
ARGENTINA.

ON THE EVE OF HER RETURN, SHE WAS ARRESTED WITH A DOZEN
ARGENTINE FRIENDS IN A HOUSE THAT THE POLICE CHARGED CON-
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TAINED SUBVERSIVE MATERIALS.

HER LETTERS, BROUGHT TO US BY FORMER SCHOOL FRIENDS, TOLD
OF BRUTAL TORTURES--QUOTE, FOUR DAYS AND FOUR NIGHTS

WHICH WERE PURE HELL. UNQUOTE.

IN THE WRITING STYLE OF WORLD WAR II'S ANNE FRANK, MISS TALAMANTE WROTE ABOUT A BIRD'S NEST ON THE JAIL'S ROOF. QUOTE. I ASKED MYSELF, UNQUOTE, SHE WROTE, QUOTE WHY THAT FREE DOVE CHOSE A JAIL'S ROOF TO BUILD ITS HOME. IT'S AS IF IT WANTS TO REMIND US THAT FREEDOM STILL EXISTS. UNQUOTE.

AN ARGENTINE EMBASSY SPOKESMAN INDIGNANTLY DENIED HER CHARGES. QUOTE. WE DON'T TORTURE PEOPLE IN ARGENTINA, UNQUOTE, HE SAID.

BUT CIVIL RIGHTS ATTORNEY LEONARD WEINGLASS AND HIS ASSOCIATE EDWARD MCCAUGHAN, WHO FLEW TO ARGENTINA IN MAY TO INVESTIGATE THE CASE, FOUND EVIDENCE THAT MISS TALAMANTE WAS TELLING THE TRUTH. THEIR REPORT HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO SEN. ALAN CRANSTON (D-CALIF.) AND REP. NORMAN Y. MINETA (D-CALIF.).

THE GIRL, WROTE WEINGLASS, QUOTE, DESCRIBED THE PARTICULARS OF HER TREATMENT...A CLOTH BAG WAS PLACED OVER HER HEAD SO SHE COULD NOT DISTINGUISH DAY FROM NIGHT...SHE WAS THEN TAKEN TO A ROOM, STRIPPED NAKED AND TIED HAND AND FOOT TO A TABLE. IN THE PRESENCE OF SIX TO EIGHT MALES, SHE WAS REPEATEDLY TORTURED WITH AN ELECTRIC SHOCK INSTRUMENT. UNQUOTE.

WEINGLASS AND MCCAUGHAN DUG INTO THE COURT RECORDS AND FOUND A DOCTOR'S REPORT DESCRIBING HER PHYSICAL CONDITION WHEN SHE WAS TRANSFERRED TO A PRISON FOUR DAYS AFTER HER ARREST. DECLARED THE DOCTOR: QUOTE. FOUND RED MARKS ON VARIOUS PARTS OF HER BODY AND COULD NOT DETERMINE THEIR ORIGINS. UNQUOTE.

U.S. EMBASSY OFFICIALS, REPORTED WEINGLASS, QUOTE NEVER READ THE COURT SUMMARY AND THEREFORE WERE UNAWARE OF THE UNCLASSIFIED

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EXISTENCE OF THE DOCUMENT. UNQUOTE.

THE EMBASSY OFFICIALS ALSO NEVER MET WITH MISS TALAMANTE'S LOCAL ATTORNEY WHO, ACCORDING TO WEINGLASS, IS CONVINCED THE GIRL IS QUOTE, THE VICTIM OF A SHABBY POLITICAL FRAME-UP. UNQUOTE.

NOR DID THE EMBASSY KNOW SHE COULD BE HELD INDEFINITELY BY EXECUTIVE FIAT. THERE IS QUOTE, NO ADEQUATE EXPLANATION, UNQUOTE, WROTE WEINGLASS, QUOTE FOR THE FAILURE OF THE UNITED STATES AUTHORITIES IN BUENOS AIRES TO...DISCOVER THE FACTS. UNQUOTE.

FOOTNOTE: STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS ADMIT THAT MISS TALAMANTE'S COURT SUMMARY HAD NOT BEEN READ BY AMERICAN AUTHORITIES AND THAT HER LOCAL ATTORNEY HAD NOT BEEN CONTACTED. THEY TRIED TO REACH HIM BUT FAILED, THEY SAID. THEY INSIST, HOWEVER, THAT THEY HAVE STAYED ON TOP OF THE CASE FROM THE MOMENT THEY DISCOVERED SHE WAS A U.S. CITIZEN. ON THE BASIS OF HER ALLEGATIONS OF TORTURE, THEY SAID, EMBASSY OFFICIALS ENTERED A FORMAL COMPLAINT WITH THE ARGENTINE GOVERNMENT. THEY ALSO SENT TWO DOCTORS TO EXAMINE HER, BUT THE PHYSICIANS FOUND NO EVIDENCE OF TORTURE, THEY SAID. THIS EXAMINATION WAS CONDUCTED MORE THAN A MONTH AFTER SHE WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE PRISON. UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 26 AUG 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE161021
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ARA/APU:RCFELDER:JC
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D750236-1118
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t197507104/baaaaosr.tel
Line Count: 124
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: hartledg
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 JUL 2003 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <22 JAN 2004 by hartledg>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 971008
Subject: n/a
TAGS: CASC, AR, (TALAMANTE, OLGA)
To: BUENOS AIRES
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006